

# Business Tourism Sentiment Survey

Town of Taos, New Mexico

Key Findings | October 2023



International Institute  
of Tourism Studies

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY



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# Methodology



This business survey is an integral part of the Destination Stewardship Plan (DSP) for the Town of Taos. The DSP represents a yearlong collaborative planning effort, led by the Town of Taos, to ensure a sustainable and community-driven approach to destination management in Taos. The DSP engages residents, community leaders, and tourism stakeholders in crafting a shared vision for the future of tourism in our town.

**Research objective:** To understand perceptions of businesses about tourism in Taos, New Mexico.

This survey was open to anyone who owns or manages a business in the Taos area.

**Online survey deployed:** September 14 to October 10, 2023, with 95 valid responses.

The survey included a total of **8 closed and open-ended questions** allowing respondents to express their views on tourism development and its effects on their business, the local economy, and Taos more broadly.

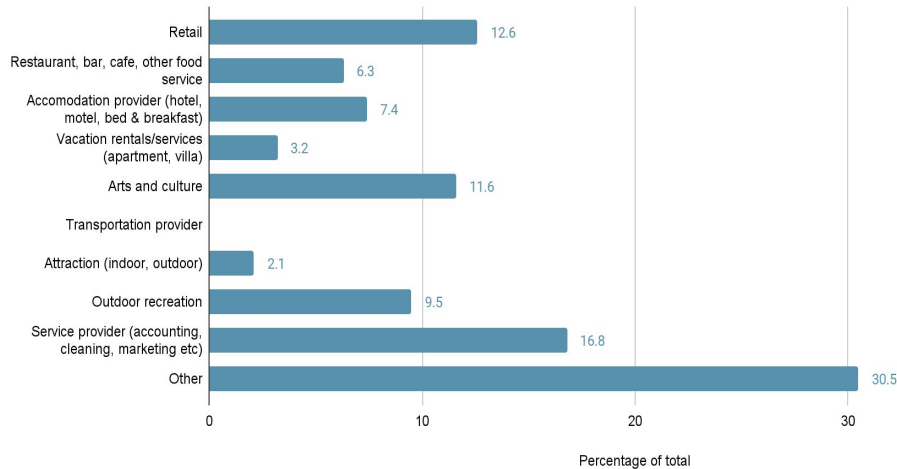


# Respondent Profile

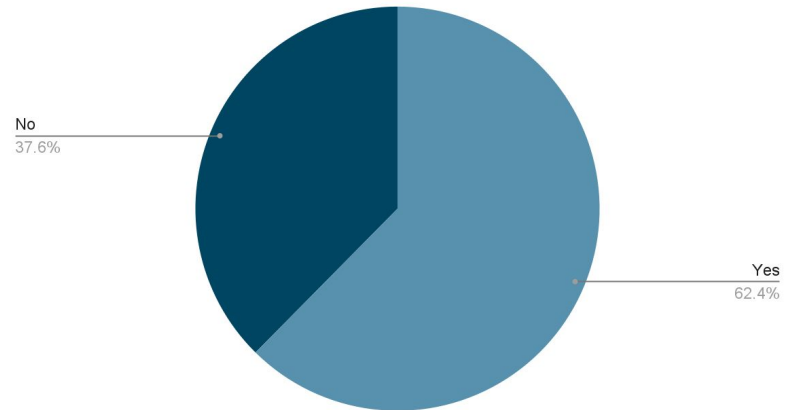


62% of the businesses surveyed **consider themselves part of the tourism industry.** Respondents represent a wide variety of businesses.

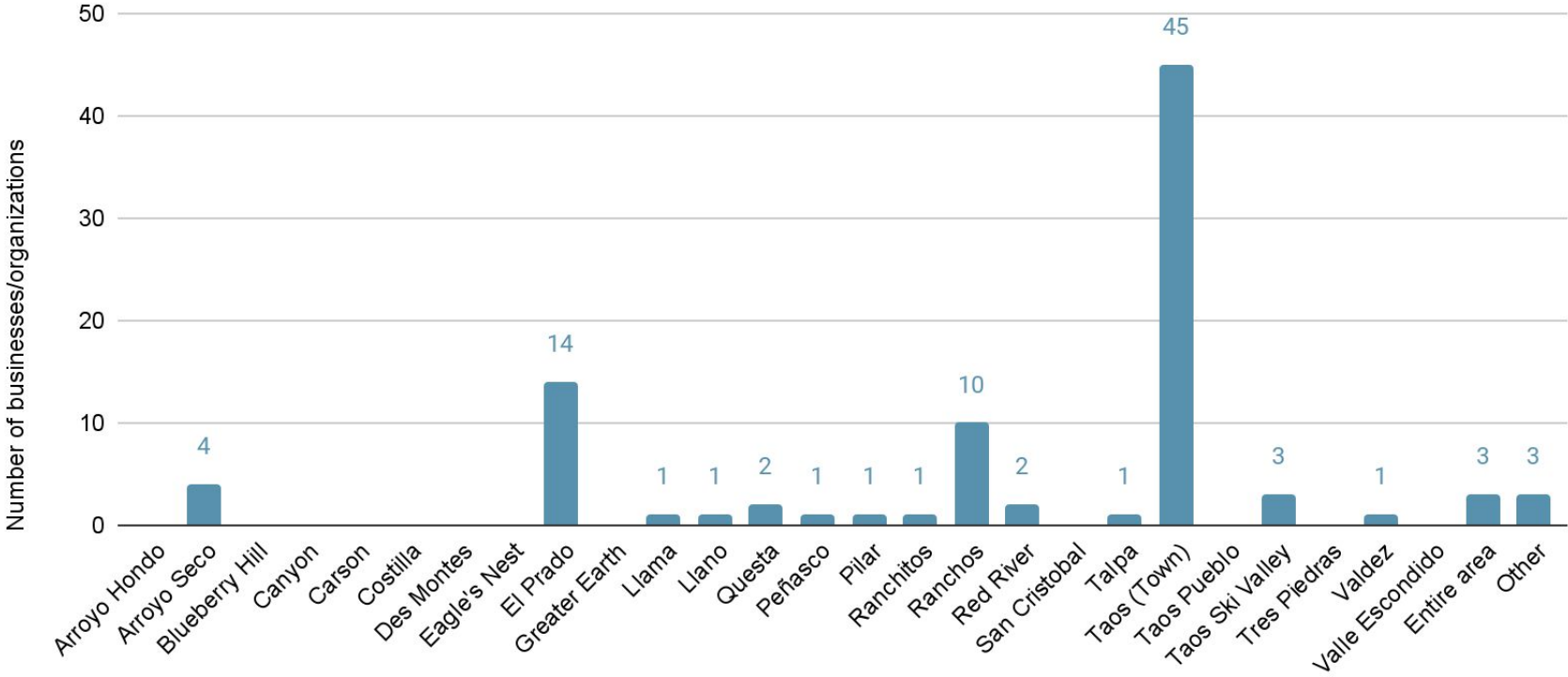
Main activity of business/organization



Is your business / organization a part of the tourism industry?

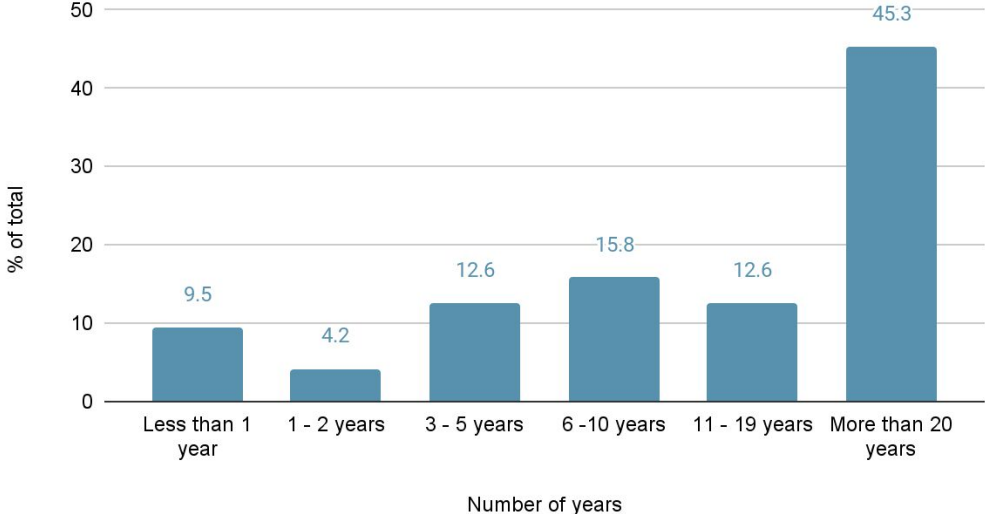


While 48% of responses were from businesses located in the Town of Taos, there were also respondents from other areas around Taos.

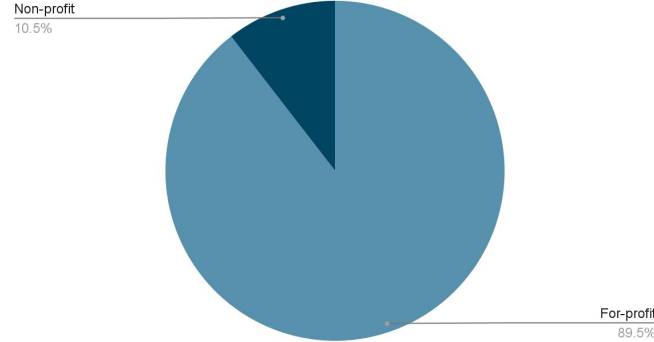


45% of respondents noted that their business has been **in operation for more than 20 years**. Nearly 16% of have been in operation for 6–10 years. The vast majority (90%) of respondents are for profit.

How long has your business been in operation?

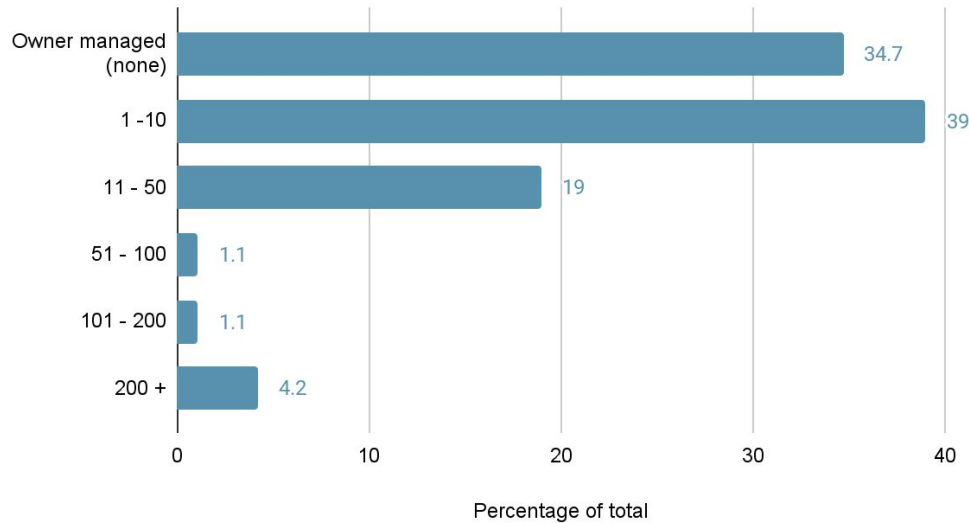


Type of entity

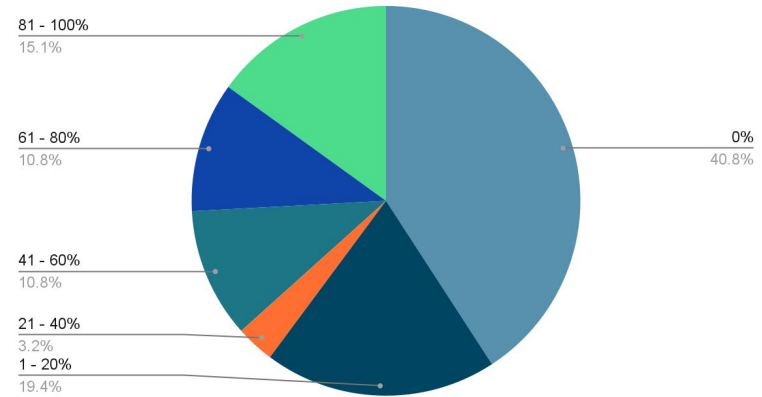


About a third (35%) of the businesses are **owner-operated** and another 39% have **between 1 and 10 employees**. About a quarter of respondents (26%) indicated that most or all of their employees (60%–100%) work **part-time**.

How many people are employed at your business/organization?



Percentage of employees that work part-time





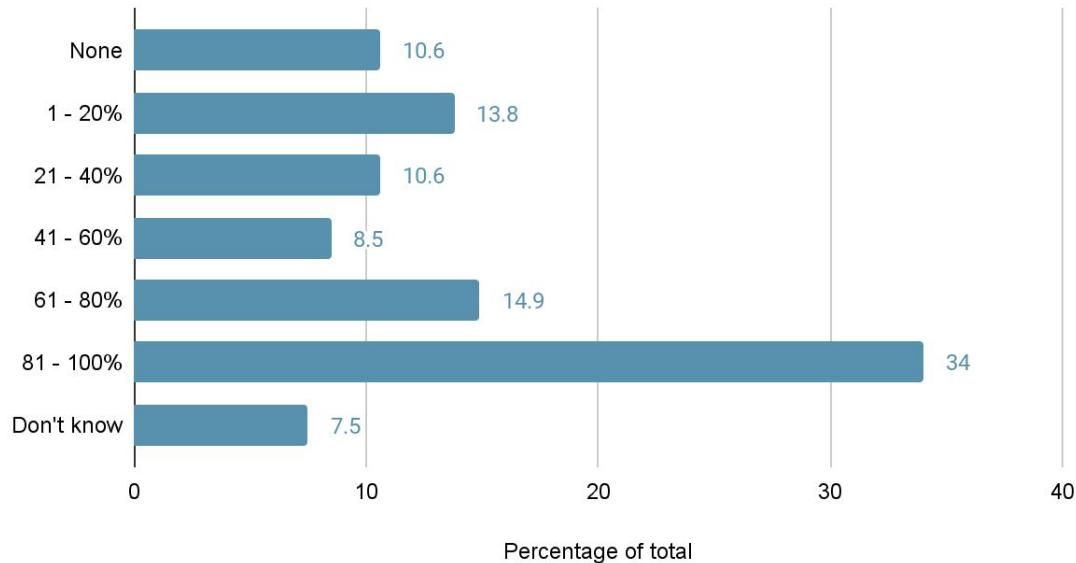
# Key Findings



## KEY FINDING 1:

Almost half (49%) of the businesses said that 60% or more of their **income depends on tourism**.

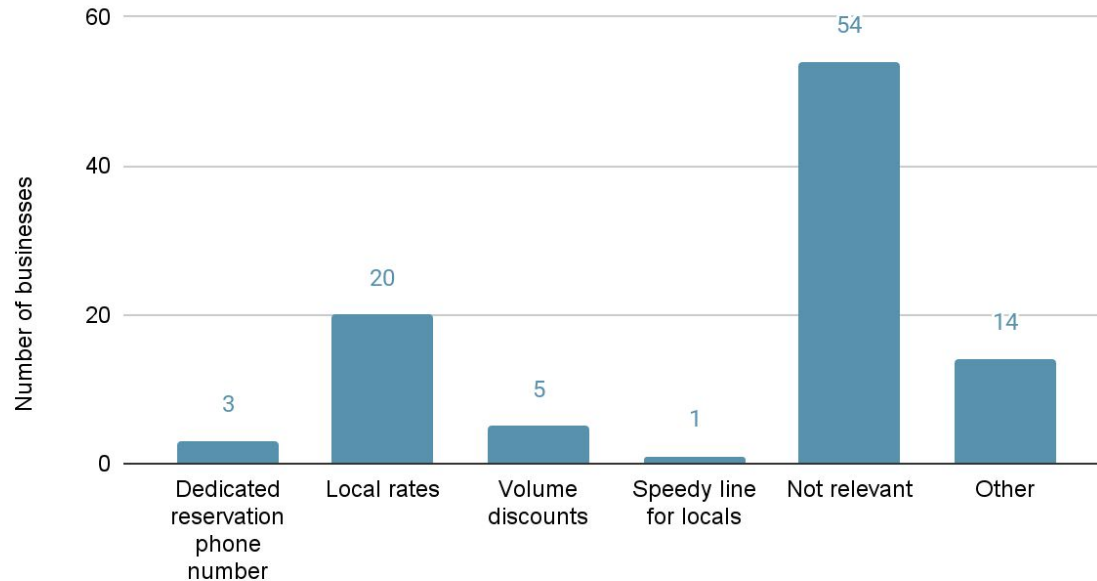
How much of the business income depends on tourism?



## KEY FINDING 2:

Twenty of the 95 businesses **offer local rates for residents.**

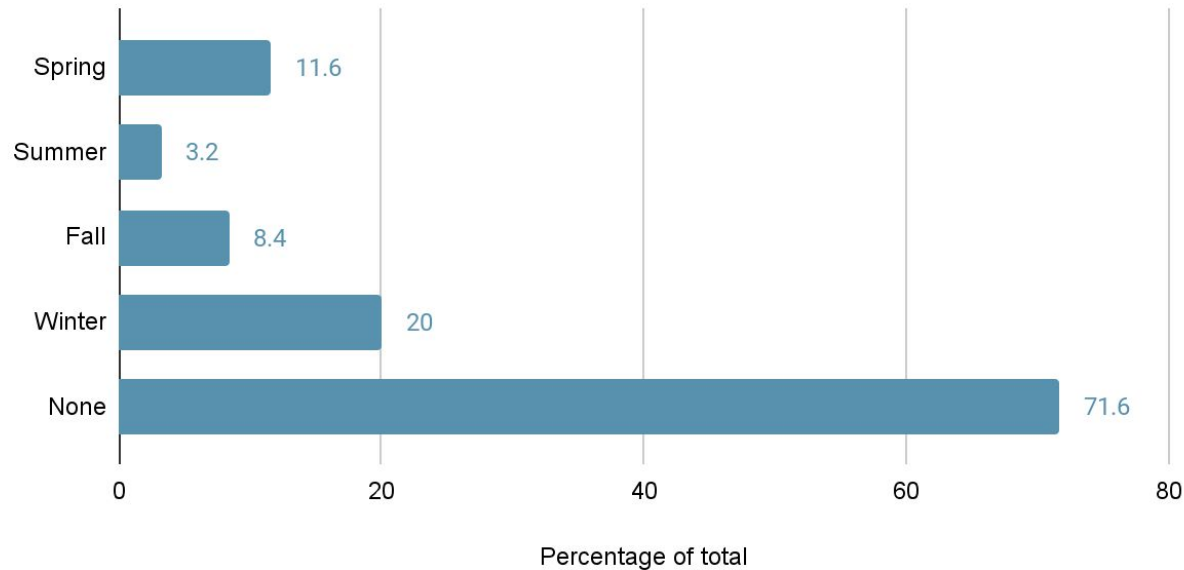
Special initiatives catering to locals



### KEY FINDING 3:

Of all businesses, 72% are **open year-round** and do not operate on reduced capacity or opening hours.

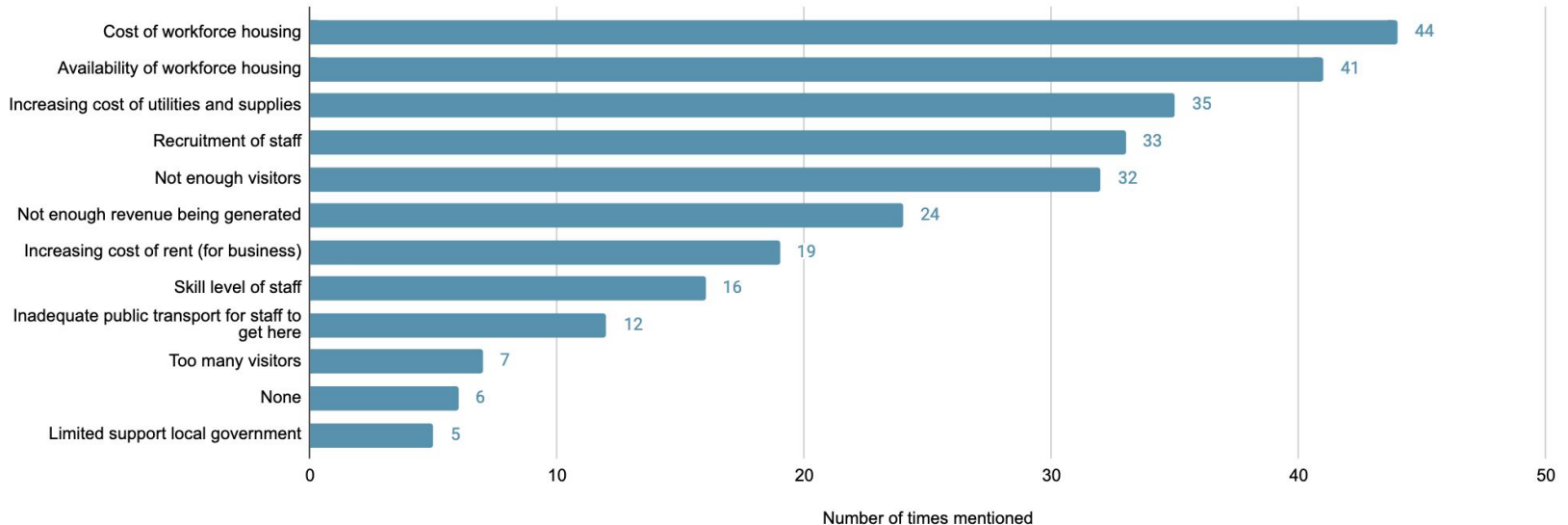
Times of year when business is closed or operating at reduced capacity/opening times



## KEY FINDING 4:

The **cost and availability of workforce housing** are the main issues affecting business operations, followed by the increasing cost of utilities and supplies. Other issues are staff recruitment and not enough visitors.

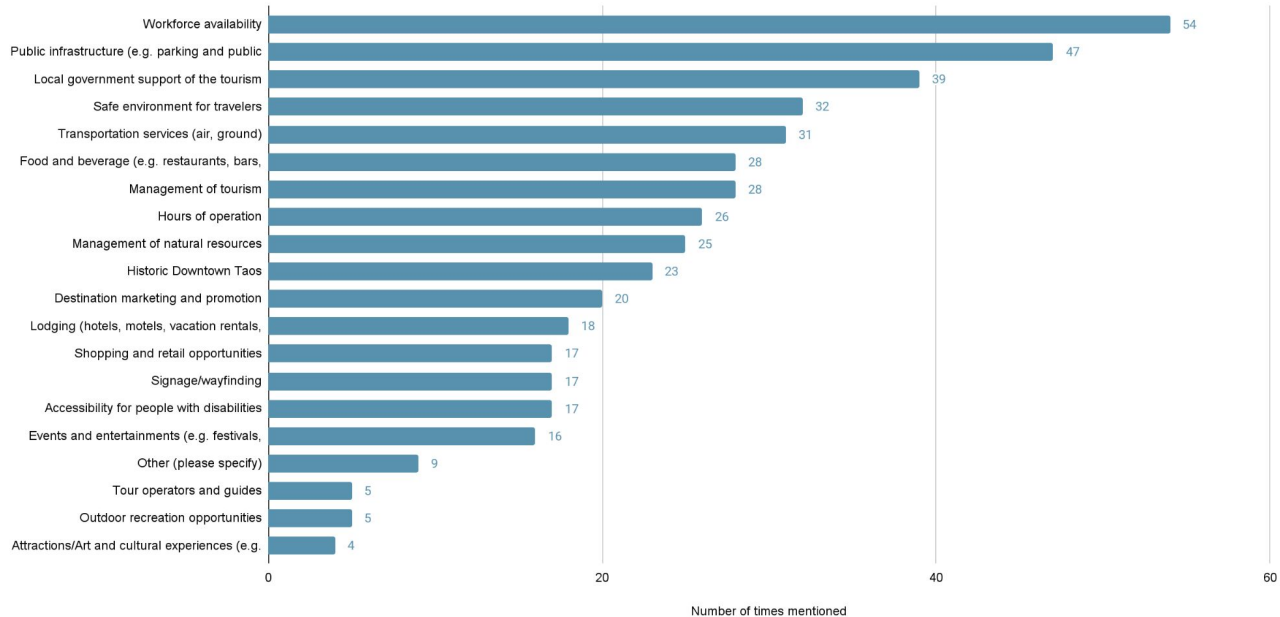
Issues affecting business operations



## KEY FINDING 5:

The **availability of workforce and the public infrastructure** are seen as the **main weaknesses**, followed by the support of the local government for tourism and safe environment for travelers.

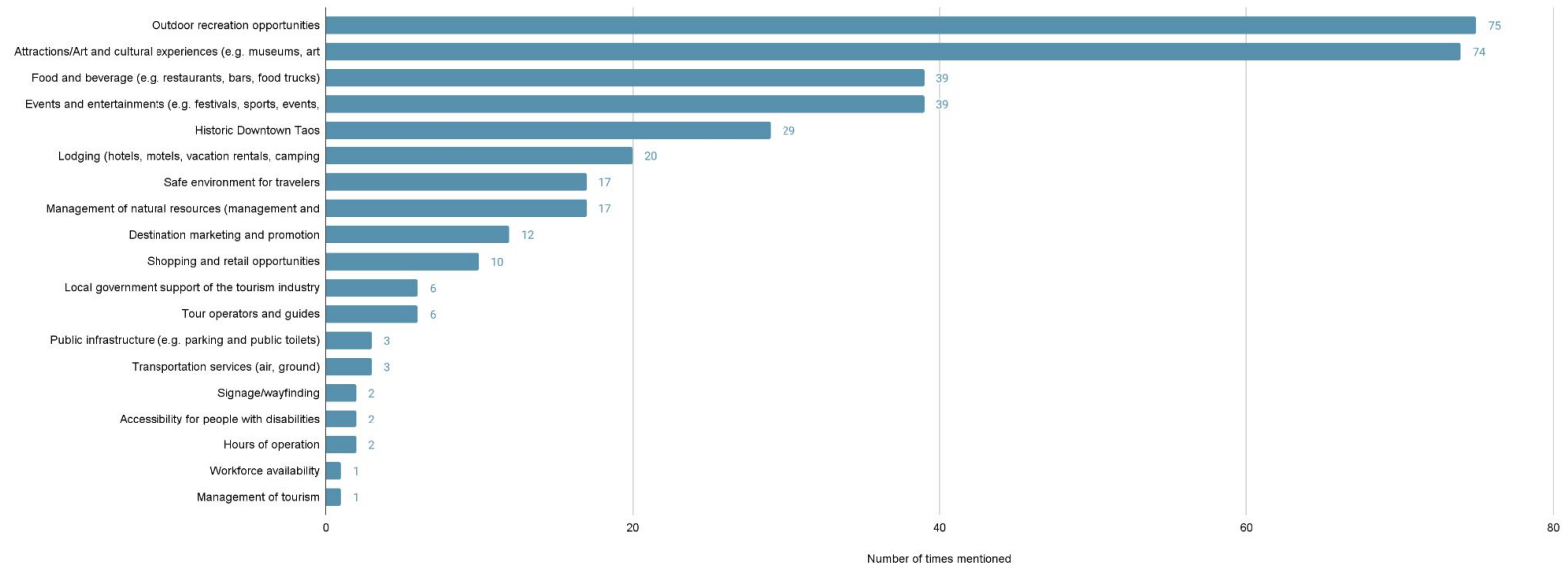
Which areas do you consider weaknesses in your community?



## KEY FINDING 6:

**Outdoor recreation opportunities, art and cultural experiences, and food and beverage are considered the main strengths of Taos.** These are followed by historic Downtown Taos and lodging options.

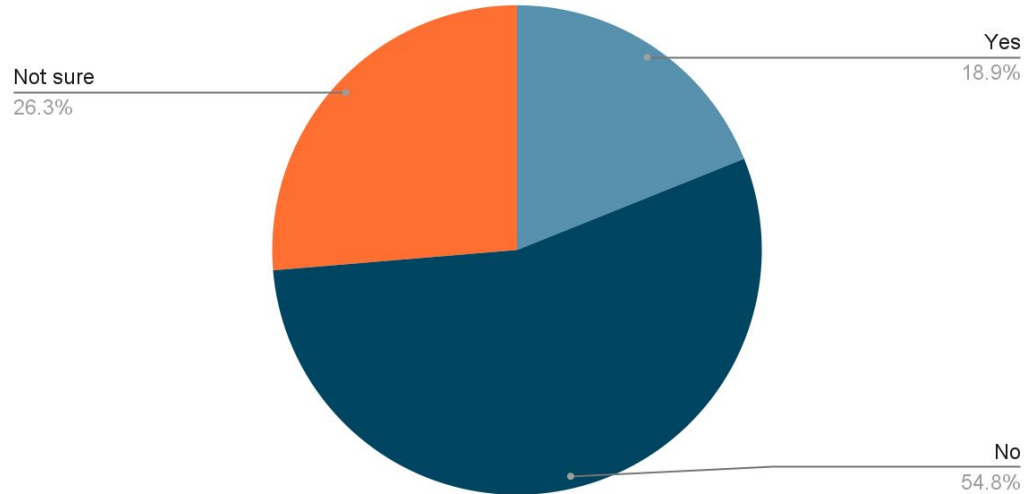
Which areas do you consider strengths in your community?



## KEY FINDING 7:

Of all respondents, 55% feel that the **government is not providing enough support to the Taos tourism sector.**

Do you feel the local government provides enough support (not just financial) to the tourism sector in Taos?

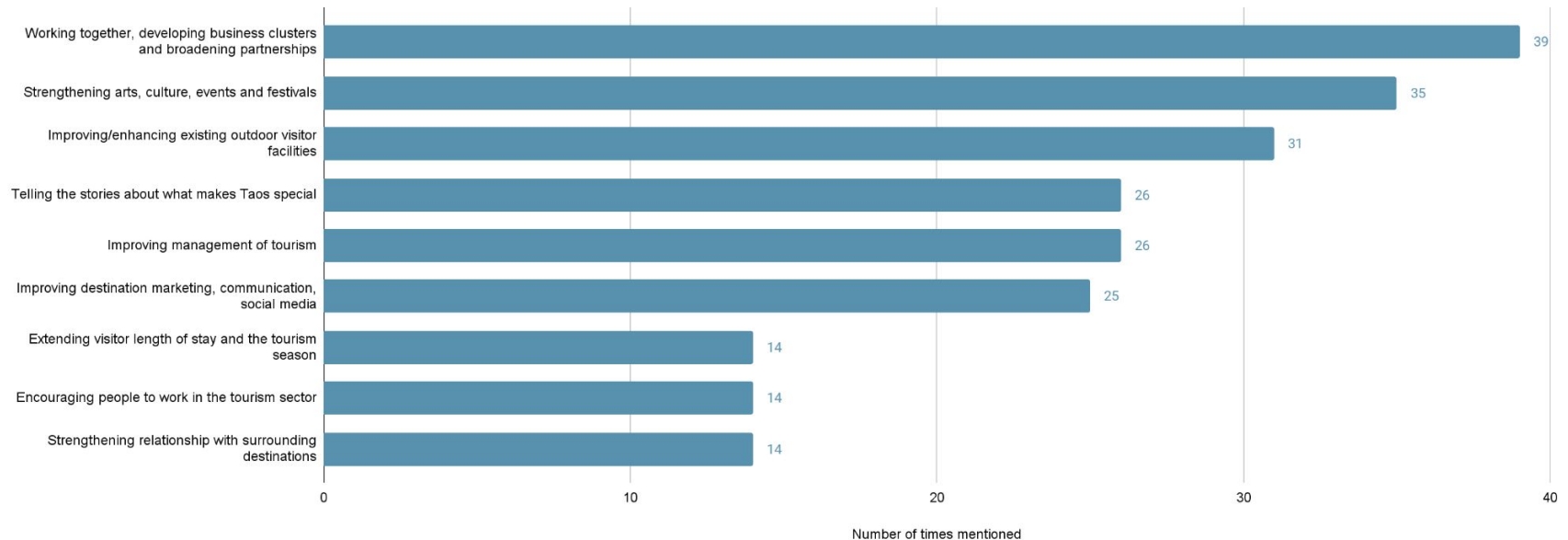




## KEY FINDING 8:

**Working together, developing business clusters, and broadening partnerships are the priorities** respondents identified for the Town of Taos. Next highest priorities are strengthening the arts and culture scene and the outdoor visitor facilities.

Which activities should the Town of Taos prioritize?



# Recap of Key Findings



1. Almost half (49%) of the businesses said that 60% or more of their income depends on tourism.
2. Twenty of the 95 businesses offer local rates for residents.
3. Of all businesses, 72% are open year-round and do not operate on reduced capacity or opening hours.
4. The cost and availability of workforce housing are the main issues affecting business operations, followed by the increasing cost of utilities and supplies. Other issues are staff recruitment and not enough visitors.
5. The availability of workforce and the public infrastructure are seen as the main weaknesses, followed by the support of the local government for tourism and safe environment for travelers.
6. Outdoor recreation opportunities, art and cultural experiences, and food and beverage are considered the main strengths of Taos. These are followed by historic Downtown Taos and lodging options.
7. Of all respondents, 55% feel that the government is not providing enough support to the Taos tourism sector.
8. Working together, developing business clusters, and broadening partnerships are the priority for the Town of Taos. Next highest priorities are strengthening the arts and culture scene and the outdoor visitor facilities.

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*Photo credits: Town of Taos*

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